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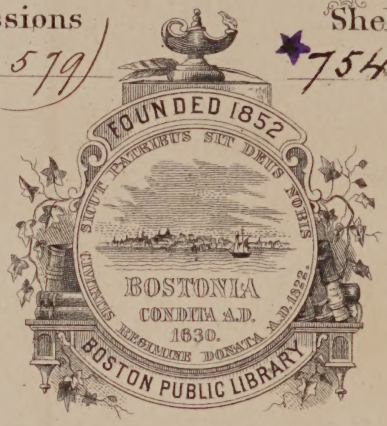

Received Sept. 20, 1890.

MR. BIGELOW'S

FAREWELL ADDRESS

TO HIS FLOCK IN TAUNTON.

1842

MR. BIGELOW'S

FAREWELL ADDRESS

TO HIS FLOCK IN TAUNTON,

DELIVERED

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20th, 1842.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY ISAAC R. BUTTS.
1843.

20579

SEP 20 1890

Taunton, Nov. 29, 1842.

To Rev. Andrew Bigelow:

Dear Sir,

In compliance with the wishes of a large number of your friends, members of the First Congregational Society in this town, we respectfully request a copy of your Farewell Address to the Society, on the 20th instant, for publication.

With respect and esteem, we remain,

Your friends, and obedient servants,

(Signed) Wm. A. F. Sproat,
Charles Richmond,
Jesse B. Smith,
Samuel B. King,
Charles H. Stephens,
And others.

Taunton, Dec. 2, 1842.

To Messrs. Wm. A. F. Sproat,
Charles Richmond,
Jesse B. Smith,
Samuel B. King,
Charles H. Stephens, and others.

Gentlemen,

The copy of my Farewell Address to the Flock on the 20th ult., which you have kindly requested for publication, though prepared without the remotest thought to such a destination, is nevertheless, in compliance with the wishes you have expressed, herewith placed at your disposal; and with cordial regards, I remain, Gentlemen, very respectfully,

Your friend and obedient servant,

Andrew Bigelow.

TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN TAUNTON.

Christian Friends,

At the time of my proposing this third sabbath of November as the day for the expiration of my pastoral office, I expected to meet and address you in person on this occasion. But other duties and arrangements interfering with the execution of my purpose, I have chosen the present method of communication, and must ask a brother's voice to give utterance in your hearing to the few thoughts herewith submitted, sketched by a mute and hasty pen, but which will receive, I trust, an equal measure of your candid attention as if spoken from my own lips.* If I am deprived thereby, of the anticipated pleasure of once more meeting you in the House of Prayer, I am saved the pain which would have mingled with the consciousness that such interview must have been our last, and that a Discourse, if delivered by me, would have had the saddening interest of a Pastoral Valedictory.

* The Rev. Samuel Barrett, of Boston, — a friend, respected and beloved, — in the pastor's absence, at his special request, read the Farewell Address.

Ten years, my friends, have elapsed since I first stood in your pulpit, an officiating minister of the Gospel of Jesus. On Sunday, the 18th of November, 1832, my first discourses were preached from that place; and thence, to the date of my settlement in the following spring, (with the exception of a brief interval in the winter,) the supply of the desk, either in person or by proxy, was committed to my sole charge. On the 10th of April, 1833, I was installed in the pastoral office, and entered on the duties of a settled ministry amongst you.

The relation of a pastor to his people is one of a tender and solemn nature. It should not be lightly formed. It should not be lightly dropped or severed. It was with unaffected solicitude and seriousness of heart that I undertook my trust as your gospel minister. I was mindful that a weighty responsibility attached to it, and that an arduous work devolved upon me. I girded myself to the task assumed, with such strength as God had given me. I went to it in the spirit of faith, of prayer, and self-devotion, — looking *above* for light and direction, — and looking *forward* with hope, not unmixed indeed with a portion of distrust, to the continuance of the joint hearty attachment and support of the Flock.

Our Saviour forewarned his disciples, that "*offences must needs come;*" and a minister, especially in these unquiet and restless times, must expect their inevitable occurrence. With ordinary discretion on his part, it depends very much on the temper of a people whether "offences" be few or many, light or serious; and how far they may prevail to obstruct the successful prosecution of his ministry. Charity and forbearance are obvious duties of every disciple of a Divine Master; and true

candor delights to lessen and extenuate, not to swell and multiply, matters of exception and offence. In a Society composed of multifarious characters of both sexes and all ages, associated for religious purposes, — what is disrelished by some, may not be distasteful to others, — perhaps to the far major portion of a Flock. The prejudices and repugnances of the former, either to certain features in the ministrations or any specific acts, if venial, in the conduct of a pastor, should not be suffered to rule paramount over the wishes and partialities of the residue, — to wit, the preponderating part of a parish. It is *selfishness* that seeks it; yet it is in the power of a few, if actuated by so narrow a motive, to disturb the general harmony and welfare of a Flock; and so to embarrass the operations of a ministry, that a pastor may find it expedient to relinquish the work, instead of remaining in it to serve as the *occasion of pretext*, though not the *culpable cause*, of the mischief produced. The evils thence resulting are neither easily nor quickly cured. A blighting injury may be inflicted on the prosperity of a church, to reach far beyond the period of its first disastrous visitations. The peace of a quiet community may be fatally interrupted: and piety be sorely wounded in the house of her friends.

It offers no very encouraging picture of human nature, to mark the progress of the spirit of opposition where a minister is the object, — to see it, when thwarted in its earlier endeavors to effect his removal, lapsing by a sure, if not rapid, transition from an acknowledgment, peradventure, in the outset, of "*the piety, learning and talents*" of the man, to an utter depreciation and denial of these and all other good qualities for which he was before cre-

dited, — and not only so, but to observe how the spirit of which I speak, rather than tolerate his continuance longer in office, would willingly see the business of the ministry brought to a *stand-still*, nay possibly, the very existence of a Religious Society vitally perilled. With others, whose opposition reaches not to this pass, the *sight* of a man whose feelings they think to be sensitively alive to the injury they may have purposed or done him, is an unwelcome monitor of their agency in such transaction. His confidence in them, they imagine, can never be restored. They wish accordingly to be rid of his presence; and even where no unworthier motive, such as envy or ill-will, influences their secret desires, yet no peace nor quiet can they know so long as the object of their repugnance is obtruded on their vision.

For myself, whatever be the causes of the opposition which has assailed me, I have deemed it incumbent on me, as a minister of the Gospel of Reconciliation, to offer myself up a sacrifice, — if at the shrine of prejudice, — still for the general peace and tranquillity of the Flock. It is my earnest prayer that the restoration of the harmony so devoutly to be wished, may speedily follow. The hope of this alleviates the pain which is felt in leaving the friends whose generous support has not failed me through all the storm and strife it has been my fortune to encounter. It adds withal to the relief which I personally experience in being discharged this day from the further exercise of a ministry, — with its cares and duties, its trials and conflicts, — in the present unhappy condition of the Flock.

The prospect, nevertheless, of the early pacification of the troubled elements now at work in the bosom of the

Parish, is obscured by gloomy clouds. The mutual confidence among its several members so indispensable to effective coöperation in the measures requisite for the end desired, seems little likely to be soon realized. If *some* there be, who may indulge in elation on witnessing the withdrawment from among them of one who has so long served at this altar, *others* and many *more*, very possibly, may not share in their satisfactions. And this generation, it is feared, must first pass away, ere there be none that remember, — none that *forget not*, whilst they may *forgive*, — the disappointments experienced, and the wrongs they feel to have been done *themselves*, in the measures which have led to a separation from the pastor of their choice.

In connexion with this topic I take leave to add, that with the same calm reliance which I have ever avowed on the gracious care of an All Wise Providence for the disposal of my future lot, I quit this place with no malevolent feelings rankling in my bosom toward my bitterest adversaries. I part from them in charity. I forgive them all their hard speeches, and their intemperate violence of opposition in a contest not always marked, indeed, with the magnanimity to be expected from generous and high-minded opponents. If they "thought evil against me, God (doubtless) meant it for good." Or if it be a chastening, I cheerfully bow to it, in submission to the Divine Will. As for them, I wish their welfare; and whatever be the consequences of the present schism, I pray God not to lay the sin to their charge.

From the time of my assuming the responsibilities of my office, I have sedulously sought the collective good of the Parish. My efforts to promote it have been in a mea-

sure foiled by the impediments thrown in my path; and too apparent it has been from the industry of some in multiplying these, that the general weal of the Society was a matter of comparative indifference in their estimation, provided it could only be ensured through my personal instrumentality. Notwithstanding this, I indulge the hope that the great objects I have had at heart, have not been wholly frustrated, nor that my labors, directed thereto, have proved altogether abortive. It gives me pleasure to reflect that the church, — despite of the wastes by death and removals, — continues *numerically* at least, as strong, as when entrusted to my watch and oversight. FIFTY-EIGHT new members have been added to its roll during the term of my ministry, — being thirty-five more than the list of the additions under that of my immediate predecessor, though embracing a period a year and a half longer. The number of Baptisms, including children and adults, has been NINETY-EIGHT.* Upwards of seven hundred Sermons have been preached by me from the pulpit, and nearly two hundred Vestry Lectures, besides the numerous Biblical Exercises which I have conducted for the benefit of the Teachers of the Sunday School, and the performance of other occasional services of a public nature. The value of the instruction thus furnished, has been differently appreciated by different portions of my parishioners. It is not from the impulse of self-love alone, that I venture to say in respect to *this* branch of my ministrations, that I am content to abide by the judgment of the numerous intelligent auditors who

* Nineteen baptisms were all that were left *on record* by the Pastor next preceding.

have again and again pronounced their acceptance and approval of their pastor's preaching. The *doctrines* delivered, I am well aware, have been distasteful to a class of my hearers; but I should have been wanting to the first duty of a religious teacher not to have inculcated what I honestly believed to be Bible Truths, or had I shunned to declare "the *whole* counsel of God," as revealed to my understanding from the pages of His Holy Word.

And here, in recording my last testimonies in your hearing, I shall make no apology, my friends, for publicly stating that my religious sentiments have undergone no material change since your choice of me for your pastor. The fruit as they then were, of previous years of diligent study of the Sacred Oracles, subsequent reflection and research have but deepened my convictions of their soundness and truth. I avow myself, to be a *Bible-man*, on strictly Protestant principles, — taking the Scriptures for my rule of faith, and reverencing their instructions because believing in their Divine authenticity. Yet I profess myself a candid seeker of such further light as they may shed, and hold myself so far in alliance with the Movement Party of the Church and Age, as to be ever in readiness, (in accordance with the maxim of the venerable Robinson of Leyden,) "to receive whatever truth shall be made known to me from *the written word of God*." But I feel bound to verify the pretensions of every new doctrine propounded on the authority of God's "*written Word*," ere yieldlng it a place among "the things most surely believed." And little confidence have I in those dubious lights struck out in the schools of a fanciful philosophy and worshipped by certain modern

idealists, who thinking themselves to "*transcend*" in wisdom, not only Moses and the Prophets, but Christ and his Apostles, have chosen a title expressive of such exaggerated conceit of their superior illumination. In contradistinction to men of this class, I avow myself to be an *old-school man*, — in a word, a CONSERVATIVE, — not believing every departure from the established standards of faith to be entitled, on the score of novelty, to the name of an *improvement*, but deeming it to be *wisest* to enjoy the light already possessed than indulge a feverish impatience in craving for more, and *safest* "to stand in the ways and see and ask for the *Old Paths*," if we would "find the good way" and get "rest to our souls."

Other instructors must now rise to fill my place. But whatever be their doctrine, — whatever the character of the Theology that may be taught from their lips, — suffer me to admonish you, my friends, that mere preaching, — though from an angel's tongue, or the voices eloquent of the most gifted of the sons of men, — mere *preaching*, alone, *cannot save your souls*. If you be blest with the ministrations of a wise and faithful shepherd, you must hearken to his instructions in the spirit of *self-application*. You must *learn* that you may *practise* the rules of duty, the lessons and commands, of the Great Teacher, CHRIST. No pastor can stand sponsor for the soul of any one of his Flock; he can endorse no man's passport to salvation. Only as piety with you is made a thing personal, and pure religion is enshrined in your hearts; — only as you achieve the victory over sin, by heroic effort, through the conquering might of Faith in "the powers of the world to come;" — only as you grow in a resemblance to your Master Jesus, and imitate

his virtue, patience, fortitude and self-denial; — only as you follow him in the humble, charitable, world-resigning temper of the Gospel, — can you hope to share in the honors of his kingdom and win the prize of salvation.

It is written, — none can gainsay it, none can evade or expunge the decree: — "*We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.*" We must there answer at his dread inquest both how we have preached and how we have heard, and abide by the arbitration of the Judge of "the quick and the dead." The hour is fast approaching. We are going, — hastening, to that high tribunal. Brethren, *are you ready?* Can you *all* stand up in the confidence of self-security, and boast a meetness for the scrutiny of the ALL-EYED GOD? Remember that you will then be tried, not by the merits of your favorite creeds, — not by your triumphs in this or that scheme of party competition, — not by the question what ministry you have enjoyed, or refused to sit under; — no, but how you have profited by the means of grace, and what is the measure of your personal qualifications for the service and favor of God in heaven.

Some of you, my friends, have little relished discourses from your pastor on the solemn theme of *man's mortality*. But still, again, must he revert to it in this parting hour, — an hour which recalls so many affecting memorials of human frailty in the images of our deceased companions which rise to weeping remembrance, — the friends who have passed from earth and its scenes since the commencement of our joint relations as pastor and people. I cannot forget, in the retrospect of my other duties, that it has been my painful lot to stand and officiate by the mournful biers of near *two hundred* fellow beings, — the

most of them plucked from out of the families of this Flock, and removed from life within that comparatively brief space. The names of one hundred and ninety three persons deceased, I find entered on the pages of this sad record. How many of these have been unexpectedly summoned away! How many, in an hour unlooked for, — either in life's bright morn, or life's sunny meridian! They have gone down to the darkness of the grave. Their shadowy forms have disappeared from terrestrial scenes. Their spirits have passed the mysterious barriers of the invisible world. Ten years more will doubtless witness removals as many, and of these a proportion as sudden and startling, as have occurred in the same period now closed. And who with the plain portents furnished from the events of the past, shall "boast" himself "of the morrow?" Who can count with confidence on the passing day, — or presume that life, — the bubble of this mortal life, — may not to him as to others, *any moment* burst — dissolved into immortality? Oh, my friends, suffer me once more then to speak to you as to dying men: I beseech you so to cherish the solemn forethought of your latter end, that it may sober your hearts, and awaken one and all to humility, watchfulness, fidelity, and holy zeal! So live, that death, when it comes, may wear no terrors on its brow. So live, as though the sound of its approaching footsteps already fell upon your ear. So live, that you may go at its summons to receive a plaudit from Celestial Lips, of "Servants, Well Done!" And may you rest from your labors with the memorials of good works following you, to brighten and enrich your "crowns of rejoicing" in the day of the Lord!

To urge the duty and wisdom of such grave forecast, I might speak of other changes: — I might remind you of the sad vicissitudes of fortune, those painful reverses in the conditions of individuals which have been so often experienced or witnessed amongst us, these few years past. And have they not shown, alas, the uncertainties and illusions of human hopes when fastened on outward comforts, — the poor perishing goods of earth? Have they not taught you, — *impressively* taught you, — my friends, that the fairest fabric of terrestrial prosperity is built upon the sands, — that it trembles with every ruffling breeze, and is liable to fall at the sudden swell, which any hour may betide it, of the rougher blasts of adversity? Should you not learn from the frequent wreck, the certain instability of worldly dependences, and the duty, with all your gettings to be mainly anxious to get the "*one thing needful?*" Should it not stir you to secure betimes the incorruptible riches, and a treasure that shall be laid up for you in Heaven beyond the reach of spoil and harm?

Enough to have touched upon this topic. I leave it, with this passing allusion, to your sober reflections, and proceed in conclusion to offer a brief parting word:

My Ministry is now to terminate. My account is made up: It passes to wait the audit of the last Great Day. The Lord grant that I may find mercy in that day, and acceptance at the hands of my Judge!

Meanwhile, our connexion, Christian friends, in this world ceases. We may meet no more in the House of Prayer. I take my leave of you; but I go, with fervent intercessions that we may all gain "an inheritance among

them that are sanctified through faith as it is in Jesus." I go, with aspirations in my heart for the future tranquillity and repose of the Flock, — that no root of bitterness may hereafter spring up to trouble it, — that its members ever more may walk together in Gospel Fellowship, — that they may "be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace," that so the "God of Love and Peace may be with them." I go, with kindly feelings entertained towards all; and especially with a warmth of grateful attachment (never to be extinguished) towards many, for the numerous marks of affectionate regard bestowed by them upon their pastor, and for their sympathies with him under the heavy trials he has endured whilst endeavoring to minister for the common welfare of the Flock. I go from you in hope, — the hope that though separated henceforth on earth, we may be all gathered, after the dispersion of mortality, in a Father's House above. Till then, our future paths in this life must be divergent; but if we walk in wisdom's ways, our feet will be safely guided to the realms of peace. We shall arrive at the same CENTRAL HOME, on Mount Zion, the City of the Living God. The Lord watch between us when we are absent one from another! The Lord grant us a final union with the "General Assembly and Church of the First Born!" And may we all there meet to worship in the beauty of holiness our Father God, — the ONE PATERNAL AND IMMORTAL KING!

In hope of that blessedness, I bid you, Friends, — Brethren and Sisters of this Church and Congregation, — a *tender, affectionate and solemn*, FAREWELL!

ANDREW BIGELOW.

Taunton, Nov. 20, 1842.

APPENDIX.

Some account of the proceedings of the Parish on its acceptance of Mr. Bigelow's resignation of his pastoral office, may be expected as an accompaniment to his Farewell Address; and it is here appended in compliance with the particular request of a number of his late parishioners.

The motives which induced the pastor to ask a dismission from his charge, were not alone the oppositions he encountered in the work of the ministry, — nor the defection of a few — to the number of twelve — from among his parishioners, who withdrew from his support. But the wearying nature of the service he was required to perform, — the incessant and anxious cares and responsibilities devolved upon his office, especially in the peculiar and trying circumstances of the Flock, — these had begun sensibly to affect both his health and spirits. He was aware, also, that the embarrassments of the times, weighing heavily on the fortunes of some of his firmest friends and supporters, rendered their proportion of the burden of his salary, a tax inconvenient to be borne. He was willing for his own sake — nay desirous — to seek some new field in the ministry, where he might hope to labor with less of wearing and exhausting effort for the general good of a people, and to afford at the same time to his late parishioners an opportunity to drop their disagreements, and unite once more in the call and settlement of another pastor.

Mr. Bigelow announced his wish to be released from the pastoral office, in a Communication addressed to the Standing Committee of the Parish under date of October 12, 1842; and the same was laid before the full body of its members at a meeting held

on the 22d of that month. The Society having considered it, voted not to grant his dismission. A subsequent application to be released from his ministerial engagements, addressed directly to the Parish by the pastor, was again weighed and rejected by a still larger vote of the Society at its second meeting, October 29, 1842. At the next adjourned meeting of that body, on Thursday, Nov. 3, a third communication from Mr. BIGELOW was presented to the Parish, which, with the Official Report of the proceedings of the latter thereupon, is annexed, and was as follows;

TO THE ADULT MALE MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY, TAUNTON; —

GENTLEMEN,

"By your Committee, Messrs. Lincoln, Robinson and Williams, I have been apprized of the result of your proceedings at the Parish meeting held on the 29th ult., for the purpose of considering and acting on the subject of the (second) Communication which I then laid before you. I am deeply obliged and grateful for the renewed expression of the steadfast attachment and generous confidence of my friends in again declining to accept the resignation of my pastoral charge of the Flock, which I felt myself constrained, from a painful but imperious sense of duty, to tender afresh to the Parish. Their indulgence I must rely upon, and their kindly appreciation of my motives I will not doubt, when I beg them, as I do now, — most earnestly yet respectfully, — to re-consider once more the subject submitted to them in my two former communications of the 12th and 28th ult., and to reverse their decisions thereon. From full and mature reflection, in view of the condition of the Parish, I am fixed, — unalterably so, — in my convictions of the expediency of an early and absolute dissolution of my pastoral connexion with the Society. And for greater explicitness I must add, that in consideration of all the circumstances, I do most sincerely and ardently wish it. I am satisfied beyond a doubt, that, from whatever causes the difficulties may have originated, I could not prosecute my ministry, in the present state of the Flock, with advantage to the Parish in general, or with any comfort or satisfaction to myself. The purposes for which the pastoral oversight of the Flock was entrusted to me, would, under such circumstances, be most essentially, if not altogether, disappointed and frustrated. I

feel persuaded, therefore, that neither my personal friends, nor any of you, my respected parishioners, in a calm review of the subject, would wish, in the present posture of things, that I should attempt to serve you longer in the Christian Ministry: — I reiterate accordingly my earnest request that I may be discharged as early as possible, from the painful and heavy responsibility. I beg my friends not to *oppose* any further, — if they will not declaratively assent to, — my renewed and anxious solicitation for a release from my pastoral office. The terms on which a separation shall take place between us, I cheerfully leave to your magnanimity and sense of justice, — to your *generous kindness*, my friends, perhaps I should say, — to determine; — only adding, that with those terms intimated in my last communication I should be satisfied. The time for the final cessation of my ministry, it is my desire to have fixed for the 20th of this month.

"Again renewing my assurances of heartfelt interest in the welfare of the Parish, and fervent aspirations for the restoration of its harmony, and future peace and prosperity, — praying that a spirit of wisdom may be vouchsafed from above to guide you to the best and wisest conclusions in the present momentous juncture, I remain, Christian Friends, very respectfully,

Yours in the Fellowship of the Gospel,

ANDREW BIGELOW.

Taunton, Nov. 3, 1842.

The above Communication having been submitted and read,

"At a meeting of the First Congregational Society in Taunton, held Nov. 3, by adjournment from October 29, 1842;

"SETH PRESBREY, Esq., being chosen Moderator *pro tem.*, in place of the Hon. WILLIAM A. F. SPROAT, the Moderator of the previous meeting, who was absent from town:

"The question of acceptance of the resignation of the pastoral charge by the Rev. ANDREW BIGELOW, being (a third time,) under consideration;

"*Voted*, That we accept the resignation of the Rev. ANDREW BIGELOW, to take effect from and after the third Sabbath of the present month, and that the Treasurer of the Society be hereby authorized and required to pay him the full amount of his salary to the close of his present parochial year, (April 15th, 1843.)

"*Voted* unanimously, That we highly appreciate the industry, zeal, fidelity and ability with which our Pastor, the Rev. ANDREW BIGELOW, has, during his ministry among us, devoted himself to the discharge of the labors and duties of his sacred office;

"That we deeply regret, that circumstances should have occurred to render it expedient, in his judgment, to dissolve his ministerial and pastoral relation to this Church and Society;

"That we would make to him, and his family, an affectionate and respectful tender of our best wishes for his and their welfare and happiness, through all the vicissitudes which, in the dispensations of Providence, await them, and through all the various events and relations of their future lives.

"*Voted*, That ALLEN PRESBREY, CHARLES ROBINSON and SAM'L B. KING, Esqrs. be a Committee to inform the Rev. Mr. BIGELOW of the acceptance of the resignation of his pastoral charge, and to present to him a copy of the foregoing votes.

"*Voted*, That the Prudential Committee of this Society be authorized and requested to publish in the papers printed in this village, so much of the proceedings of this meeting as they may deem it expedient; — said proceedings to be signed by the officers of the meeting.

(Signed) SETH PRESBREY, *Moderator.*
(Signed) ICHABOD LINCOLN, *Clerk.*

Taunton, Nov. 3, 1842.

The Committee appointed to report to Mr. BIGELOW the results of the meeting, immediately waited upon him at his house, and after a brief interview returned with the following communication, which closed the official correspondence:

TO THE MALE MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN TAUNTON:

GENTLEMEN,

"I thank you for your acceptance of the resignation of my office as your Minister: — I thank you for your kindly

expressions of regard as shown in the Resolves adopted by you at your meeting this day. — My respectful acknowledgments are also due, — and they are heartily tendered, — for your liberality in granting my salary in full, till the close of the present parochial year.

"I leave you with my best wishes, — praying that God may be with you, and that His Wing may cover you. May He lead you in wisdom's ways, and in the paths of peace! And that you and all the members of the Flock may be "heirs together of the grace of life," — is the prayer, Christian Friends, of one who with affectionate respects, remains

Yours in the Faith and Fellowship of the Gospel,

ANDREW BIGELOW.

Taunton, Nov. 3, 1842.

In connexion with the foregoing account of the proceedings of the Pastor and Parish, in mutually arranging and disposing the question and terms of a Separation, the papers annexed will not be without interest as forming a part of the collateral history, and showing the estimation of MR. BIGELOW's services by other portions of the Flock.

On the 21st of September 1842, the Ninth (public) Annual Celebration of the Sunday School was held, on which occasion a beautiful piece of plate, — a silver pitcher, — the gift of the Teachers of the School, was presented to the Pastor by the hands of the Superintendent, accompanied with a feeling and pertinent Address. The pitcher bore the inscription, "Presented to the REV. ANDREW BIGELOW by the Teachers of the Unitarian Sunday School, Taunton, Mass. in testimony of his fidelity as a friend, his graces as a Christian, and his zeal and ability as a Minister of the Gospel."

MR. BIGELOW, in making his acknowledgments, added the remarks contained in the following

ADDRESS TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Mr. Superintendent, and Ladies and Gentlemen, — Teachers of this Sunday School;

I know not in what terms to express my gratitude for the unexpected and distinguished mark of your generosity, which you have bestowed upon me. I feel, believe me, a deep sense of the obligation conferred, yet find myself totally inadequate to do justice either to my own feelings in the reception of so costly a proof of your affectionate regard, or to the claims which your generous kindness imposes on my grateful sensibilities. I thank you, nevertheless, from my heart: I thank you, Mr. Superintendent, for the flattering sentiments you have expressed in behalf of yourself and associates in the presentation of this rich offering; and I thank you, kind friends, one and all, for so splendid a memorial of your obliging benevolence as that now placed in my keeping, and which, I need not add, will be ever prized as one of my choicest treasures.

I know of no offices of mine, Fellow Teachers, toward yourselves, or the School whose interests we have jointly watched over, which could merit such testimonial of their deserts. That I have loved this Sabbath School, is most true; but in this, I have only shared your common attachments. That I have looked to it with pride and joy as the future hope and stay of the flock, is also most true; but the importance of the institution, and its auspicious influences, prospectively at least, on the lasting good of the rising generation, have been none the less felt, — they have been equally realized, — by yourselves.

I found, indeed, the School, on my entering on the pastoral charge of the Parish, in a feeble and languishing condition. It has increased nearly threefold in the number of its enrolled scholars; and twice three-fold, we think we may safely say, in the sum of its combined advantages and efficient means of usefulness. It is now the largest, — and we trust without presumption it may be added, — the most flourishing Sunday School of any connected with the Unitarian Societies within the limits of the Old Colony. We number not far from Two Hundred and Fifty Children, including both divisions of the school, — the Infant and Higher departments; and in the instruction or oversight thereof, between Forty and Fifty Teachers are statedly employed. The average attendance of the

classes is not only absolutely far greater, but *comparatively* yet more so, than when the muster-roll of our school exhibited an aggregate of but some Eighty or Ninety scholars.

Still, the prosperous condition of this branch of the Parish, could only, (under God,) have been ensured by the patient, devoted and zealous coöperation of the many fellow-workers who have acted in cordial concert with their Pastor in the measures devised to promote the general object. Some, it is true, of our earlier associates have dropt off from the service; but their places have been promptly supplied, and abundantly made good by others, who have come up to the delightful work. I feel pleasure in further stating, that much of the success of our enterprise is due to the cheering countenance of the numerous *parents* who have smiled on our efforts, and evinced their acceptance of our united labors. God bless them all for their kindly patronage! and God bless and largely recompense both *their* and your benevolent offices, Fellow Teachers, in aiding your Pastor in his humble endeavors to advance the welfare of this Sabbath School, and make it, — what it at this day is, — "a name and a praise" to the Flock!

I am shortly to leave you, my beloved friends. The union which has subsisted between us, the tie — that pleasant tie — which has bound me to the Children and Teachers now before me, and to the fathers and mothers, the aged and the young, — in a word, to the members collectively of this Christian Society, — will soon and forever be dissolved. The present is the last Annual Celebration on which I shall ever probably — either as Pastor or visitor — meet this Sabbath School. But I shall leave you with fervent prayers for its future prosperity, — that still it may flourish a *noble vine*. Heaven send it Its richest, holiest dews, — and nourish the tender germs of Faith and Hope, now in genial promise, into fruits matured, — fruits immortal and divine, — meet for the clime of Paradise!

I have loved this Sabbath School. Dear it has been to my heart; and dear in remembrance it will always abide. Neither absence, nor time, nor distance shall dim the sweet memorial: but green — aye — *green* to the eye of memory, it will ever live.

Yes, I *have* loved this Sabbath School. I have served it — as I venture also to affirm that I have served the Parish at large — with *a true heart* although, alas, with many defects in my endeavors to shape the purposes cherished into due performance. My account

is now made up. It is committed to the custody of that Great and Good BEING, who is at once the righteous Judge, and the sovereign and all-wise Disposer of the lot of every servant. Partings are sad, — the partings of *friends;* and the present separation is one in some respects peculiarly trying, at least to my personal sensibilities: But God wills it: And I take my leave of you, therefore, if with pain, yet with no repinings, — content that what I have planted, others shall water, — and where I have labored, others will arise to enter on the field and carry forward the good work with happier auspices, I hope, than him who quits it, and with the reaping of a more luxuriant harvest.

And now, my beloved friends, to the care of the CHIEF SHEPHERD, do I affectionately commend you. May He specially guard the youthful charge, the tender lambs of the flock, whom you will continue to watch and tend. May He lead them to "green pastures," and "beside the still waters." — May the sweet charities distilled from the gospel of grace, be infused into every bosom. And may the Spirit of Power and Love Divine hover in smiles, — merciful and dove-like, — over this little fold!

Yes, that GOD may be with you, and that His arm may shelter you, is the prayer of one who now offers you jointly, — the associate Teachers and Youth of this Sunday School, — his parting salutations, — bidding you, as he does, a last affectionate FAREWELL.

A. B.

Taunton, September 21st, 1842.

In the month of October, 1842, a document, of which the following is a copy, was put into the hands of the Pastor, by a Committee of the LADIES of his Parish;

"The Ladies of the First Congregational Society of Taunton take this opportunity of manifesting their sincere personal attachment to their Pastor, the Rev. ANDREW BIGELOW; and while they hereby express their sense of the value of his public ministrations, and bear witness to the fidelity with which he has discharged the duties of his sacred calling, unite in the cordial desire that he should continue with them in the office of the Ministry."

Signed by 189 Ladies of the Parish.

Taunton, October, 1842.

(Mar., 1890, 20,000)

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